



Organization for Black Struggle Records (S1240)

Collection Number: S1240

Collection Title: Organization for Black Struggle Records

Dates: 1970-2016

Creator: Organization for Black Struggle

Abstract: The Organization for Black Struggle Records (OBS) contains correspondence, press releases, flyers, and newsletters pertaining to the group's mission to address the needs and issues of the Black working class in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area. Topics of interest include housing and job discrimination cases, criminal justice reform, and apartheid in South Africa.

Collection Size: 3 cubic feet
(72 folders, 905 photographs, 35 video cassettes)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at stlouis@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given and assigned to the Society all rights of copyright, which the Donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor's works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the University from others.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Organization for Black Struggle Records* (S1240); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

Donor Information: The records were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Jamala Rogers on July 22, 2021 (Accession No. SA4528). Additions were made on December 10, 2021, by Jamala Rogers (Accession No. SA4528.2); and March 9, 2022, by Jamala Rogers.

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Organization for Black Struggle Records (S1240) can be found in the following collections:

Missouri Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE) Records (S0292)

Laborvision Video Collection (S0913)
Double Helix Corporation Records (S0199)

Processed by: Processed by Zack Palitzsch, January 2024

Historical Note:

In 1980, a group of activists, students, union organizers, and community members, formed the Organization for Black Struggle in order to fill the vacuum of Black radical leadership brought about by the attacks on the Black Liberation Movement in the late 1970s. They sought to unite the Black community against racial injustices through radical and militant social and political activism. Since then, the group has consistently been at the forefront of issues involving the St. Louis Black community such as police brutality, employment, public education, housing, and healthcare. One notable case they were involved in was the fight to overturn the murder conviction of Ellen Reasonover, who was wrongly convicted of killing James Buckley, a gas station worker. Due in part to the Organization for Black Struggle's financial and public support of the case, Ellen Reasonover was eventually declared innocent in 1999 after spending 17 years in prison.

The Organization for Black Struggle has been protesting police brutality since its inception and has organized numerous demonstrations. They gained national support with their involvement in seeking justice for Michael Brown, an unarmed teen shot and killed by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014. Many of the protests in Ferguson were organized by the Organization for Black Struggle. They spurred a nationwide movement to protest police brutality and racial injustices.

Al Lumpkins and Jamala Rogers served as the organization's first chair and co-chair, respectively. Rogers continues to serve the organization as its executive director.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following six series:

Administration
Campaigns and Initiatives
Programs
Publications
Photographs
Video

Scope and Content Note:

Administration

This series contains correspondence and meeting agendas regarding the governance of the Organization for Black Struggle and their involvement in the issues of racism and discrimination against the Black working class. The correspondence discusses topics such as human rights, politics, police brutality, labor, and community relations. The materials in this series date from 1980 to 2008 and are arranged alphabetically. The correspondence is arranged chronologically.

Campaigns and Initiatives

This series contains correspondence, reports, statements, and surveys regarding cases involving racial and sex discrimination. Issues include housing, employment, sex, and education. The materials in this series date from 1980 to 2008 and are arranged chronologically.

Programs

This series contains booklets, correspondence, flyers, newspaper clippings, and press releases regarding the various programs and events the Organization for Black Struggle held including affirmations, anniversary celebrations, Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, membership retreats, and Pamoja sessions. Also included are meeting minutes and reports from the committees that planned these events. The materials in this series date from 1981 to 2016 and are arranged alphabetically.

Publications

This series contains calendars, bulletins, newsletters, press releases and statements documenting the activities and positions of the Organization for Black Struggle. Topics of interest include Ellen Reasonover's wrongful incarceration, police brutality, and racial justice. The materials in this series date from 1980 to 2010 and are arranged alphabetically.

Photographs

The photographs in this series depict events held by the Organization for Black Struggle including African Liberation Day, rallies, conferences, vigils, anniversary celebrations, picnics, and retreats. The photographs date from 1975 to 2002 and are arranged alphabetically by event.

Video

This series contains VHS tapes depicting Organization for Black Struggle events such as affirmations, African Liberation Day, anniversaries, International Women's Day Programs, Pamoja Sessions, and discussions. The materials in this series date from 1987 to 2001 and are arranged alphabetically by event.

Container List:

f. 1-4	Administration
Box 001	f. 1 Advisory board, correspondence and meeting agendas, 1995-2003
	f. 2-4 Correspondence, 1980-2002, 2006, 2008
f. 5-12	Campaigns and Initiatives
	f. 5 Housing incident cases, 1986, 1999, 2004
	f. 6 Other cases, 1987-2006
	f. 7 Women's issues, 1989-1998
	f. 8 Job discrimination cases, 1990-1999
	f. 9 Education incident cases, 1991
	f. 10 Listening Project on Peace and Security, 2004
f. 11-30	Programs
	f. 11 Affirmations, 1991-2004, 2010
	f. 12-17 Anniversary celebrations, 1981-2017

- f. 18 Biodevastation Planning Committee, 2003
- f. 19 Family picnics, 1989-1991, 2000
- f. 20 Leadership and Training Workshop, 1999
- f. 21 Audre Lorde LGBT scholarship, 2006
- f. 22-23 Martin Luther Kin, Jr. Holliday Committee, 1980-1984, 1986
- f. 24 Membership retreats, 1990-2016
- f. 25 Organizing Conference, 2005
- f. 26-27 Pamoja sessions, 1992-2004
- f. 28 Phone-a-Thon, 1994-2008
- f. 29 Program Committee, 1995-1996
- f. 30 Special events, 1997-1998
- f. 31-36 Publications
 - f. 31 Annual calendars, 1990-2002
 - f. 32-34 Membership bulletins, 1986-2010
 - f. 35 Newsletters, 1981-2008
 - f. 36 Press releases and statements, 1980-2002, 2006-2007
- f. 37-72 Photographs
- Box 002
 - f. 37 Affirmations, 1240.1-1240.59, 1991, 1999
 - f. 38 African Liberation Day, 1240.60-1240.91, 1999
 - f. 39 Annie Malone Parade, 1240.92-1240.109, 1980
 - f. 40-42 Anniversary celebrations, 1240.110-1240.344, 1982-1999
 - f. 43 Black Radical Congress, 1240.345-1240.403, 1994, 1998
 - f. 44 Black Radical Congress forum, 1240.404-1240.413, 1999
 - f. 45 Black Radical Congress, Jobs and Justice event at the Gateway Arch, 1240.414-1240.427, 1999
 - f. 46 Black United Front, Anti-Apartheid Rally, 1240.428-1240.444, 1985
 - f. 47 Black United Front, shoe give away, 1240.445-1240.449, 1985
 - f. 48 CAPCR, Marilyn Banks, 1240.450-1240.458, 1984
 - f. 49 Death penalty, National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, conference, 1240.459-1240.472, 1998
 - f. 50 Death penalty protests, including Mumia Abu-Jamal, 1240.473-1240.476, 1999
 - f. 51 Death penalty vigil, 1240.477-1240.479, 2002
 - f. 52 Earth Day, 1240.480-1240.493, 1987
 - f. 53 Ferrario trial, Kansas City, Missouri, 1240.494-1240.503, 1983
 - f. 54 Kwanza, 1240.504-1240.539, 1998
 - f. 55 MAAT, 1240.540-1240.551, 1994
 - f. 56 Marilyn Banks rally, 1240.552-1240.567, 1983
 - f. 57 Martin Luther King March, 1240.568-1240.585, 1982-1989
 - f. 58 National Black United Front, 7th and 14th Annual Conventions, 1240.586-1240.635, 1986, 1993
 - f. 59 OBS Picnic, 1240.636-1240.647, 1994
 - f. 60 OBS Retreat, 1240.648-1240.656, 1999
 - f. 61 Other events, "BLT," "Sounding Off" book signing, human rights conference, and "Bid Whist," 1240.657-1240.674, 1981-1997
 - f. 62 Pamoja Sessions, 1240.675-1240.698, 1995-1996
 - f. 63 Police brutality protest, 1240.699-1240.717, October 22, 1998
 - f. 64 Protest against Dellwood, Missouri, police, 1240.718-1240.723, 1997

- f. 65 Protest against the Gulf War, 1240.724-1240.733, 1990-1991
- f. 66 Rowan Community Center, 25th Anniversary Celebration, 1240.734-1240.785, 1999
- f. 67 Rowan Community Center rehabilitation, 1240.786-1240.789, 1999
- f. 68 Kalamu ya Salaam, 1240.790-1240.800, 1998
- f. 69 Save Atlanta's Children rally, 1240.801-1240.817, 1984
- f. 70 Springfield, Illinois, rally, 1240.818-1240.840, 1975-1979
- f. 71 Unidentified march, St. Louis, Missouri, 1240.841-1240.849, 1970-1979
- f. 72 Youth Congress, picnics and retreat, 1240.850-1240.905, 1989-1990, 1998-1999
- v.c. 1-35 Video
 - v.c. 1 National Black United Front, various footage, 1986
 - v.c. 2-3 National Black United Front, land power and self-determination, no date
 - v.c. 4 National Black United Front, luncheon, Houston, Texas, speaker, Jacob Carruthers, July 17, 1993
 - v.c. 5 National Black United Front, workshops, 1993
 - v.c. 6 Affirmations, tape 2, 1995
 - v.c. 7 Affirmations, youth explosion, March 31, 2001
 - v.c. 8 African Liberation Day, May 23, 1992
 - v.c. 9 3rd and 4th Anniversary Celebrations, 1983-1984
 - v.c. 10-12 9th Anniversary Celebration, January 28, 1989
 - v.c. 13 11th Anniversary Celebration, January 26, 1991
 - v.c. 14-15 12th Anniversary Celebration, January 25, 1992
 - Box 003 v.c. 16-17 14th Anniversary Celebration, January 29, 1994
 - v.c. 18 19th Anniversary Celebration, 1998
 - v.c. 19-20 21st Anniversary Celebration, 2000
 - v.c. 21-22 International Women's Day program, 1990
 - v.c. 23 Karamu, 2002
 - v.c. 24-28 Pamoja Sessions, 1993-1994, 1997
 - v.c. 29-30 Rally for Justice, 2001
 - v.c. 31 Youth Cultural Theater, "The Names Have Not Been Changed," no date
 - v.c. 32 Council for Positive Youth Development, OBS Youth Retreat, April 13, 1990
 - v.c. 33 Youth Panel, "Killing Kids for Justice," August 12, 1989
 - v.c. 34 *Fight Back*, April 2002
 - v.c. 35 OBS work, 1987

Index:

Index Term	Folder	Medium	Image
Abortion--Law and legislation	6-7		
African Americans--Economic conditions	6, 26-27, 35-36	v.c. 24-28	
African Americans--Employment	2, 8		

Index Term	Folder	Medium	Image
African Americans--Politics and government	6, 26-27, 32, 35-36, 62	v.c. 24-48	Yes
Black nationalism	1-72	v.c. 1-35	Yes
Black Radical Congress	43-45		Yes
Capital punishment	33-36, 49-51		Yes
Civil rights	32-36		
Concerned Auto Workers	2		
Corrections--United States	2		
Discrimination in education	9		
Discrimination in employment	2, 6, 8		
Discrimination in housing	5		
Elections--Missouri--Saint Louis	2-3, 32-36		
Environmental justice	18		
General Motors Corporation	2		
International Women's Day	7, 11, 33, 35	v.c. 21-22	
Lumpkins, Al	2		
Martin Luther King, Jr., Day	22-23		
Missouri State Penitentiary	2, 32-33, 36		
National Black United Front	46-47, 58	v.c. 1-5	Yes
Organization for Black Struggle	1-72	v.c. 1-35	Yes
Police brutality	6, 33, 35-36, 63		Yes
Police misconduct	2-3, 6, 32-36, 63		Yes
Prisoners--Civil rights	2, 4, 32-33, 36		
Prisoners--United States	2, 4, 32-33, 36		
Race discrimination	2-4, 8-9, 18, 32-36		
Racism	2-6, 8-9, 18, 32-36		
Reasonover, Ellen	32-33, 35-36		
Rogers, Jamala	1-72		
Saint Louis (Mo.). Metropolitan Police Department	2-3, 6		
Salaam, Kalamu ya	33, 35-36, 68		Yes
Sex discrimination	7, 36		
United Methodist Church	3		